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ABSTRACT

In order to evaluate time management practices among managers of large academic libraries, questionnaires were mailed to 189 library directors. A total of 158 surveys were returned for a response rate of 82%. Items used to collect data in the questionnaire were based on time management literature and were grouped into five categories: (1) a profile of the respondents; (2) how a manager's time is reportedly spent; (3) delegation of authority; (4) time wasters; and (5) leadership style. Analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical package, including frequency, Pearson product-moment correlation, and chi-square with cross tabulation. Comparisons were also made between library directors' lists of top-10 time wasters and responses of sales representatives and engineering managers. Results of the study indicate that while the population was mature, both in age and experience, almost half of the respondents (46.5%) had been in their current position five years or less. Most administered staffs of less than 300 employees, and only 21% of them were female. Good to excellent knowledge in the area of delegation of authority was demonstrated by 85-90% of the directors; however, significant associations were found between the number of years as library director and effective delegation of authority. A majority of directors indicated team management as their preferred management style. Selection of the top three time wasters included simultaneous acceptance of duties; personal disorganization; and amount of time spent on committee work. A list of references is provided. (JB)

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A TIME MANAGEMENT STUDY

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
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Today's information managers are working under considerable pressures--pressures that are unique to this period of time in our institutional and national development. Writers such as Alvin Toffler and John Naisbitt have made us aware of the on-going change in our world from an industrial nation to an information society. The roles of all institutions are in the process of change. New technologies are available to assist in providing better control over information, and their use is rapidly being adapted to a wide range of services and operations--but the cost is high. These high costs of managing information have come about at a time when institutional budgets are considerably leaner than they were. If the challenges of this new information society are to be met head-on, personnel costs must be reduced. This means that along with the new technological time saving devices, both staff and management will need to become more productive. One road to increased productivity is that of efficient time management.

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A study on time management practices was undertaken among one group of information managers--the directors of large academic libraries--with the support of a Librarian/Scholar grant from the Council on Library Resources. Although the study can only be generalized to other groups based on the degree to which they fit the description of the population surveyed, the results will be of interest to all types of information professionals, including those in media services and telecommunications who work in institutions of higher education.

Although there is a considerable body of writing and research on the subject of time management in the business literature, little existed in the library literature that dealt specifically with management. A survey approach was deemed the most useful method to generate data that would provide insights useful in evaluating time management practices among managers of large academic libraries. The results of this study provided a basis for evaluating the training of library managers, determining the need for additional research in the field, and an opportunity for academic library directors to compare their own responses to those of others in similar positions.

Objectives of the Study

Four objectives of the study were designed to determine:

1. To what degree library managers are aware of and practice efficient time management methods, including delegation of authority and leadership style.
2. Time management practices as related to:
 - a. leadership style

- b. sex of manager
 - c. number of people managed
 - d. years of experience as a library director
3. Identification of the most serious time wasters.
 4. How library directors reportedly spent their time based on twelve specified categories.

Sampling

The population that was surveyed consisted of 189 directors from large academic libraries. Two mailings of the survey were sent out to ensure at least a 60 percent return. The final number of questionnaires returned was 159. Since the entire population of directors of large academic libraries were polled, and 82% of them responded, we may for all practical purposes consider that we are dealing with a population as opposed to a sample in this study.

Data Collection, Analysis and Results

Items used to collect the data in the mailed survey were based on the time management literature. They fell into five categories: 1) a profile of the respondents, 2) how a manager's time is reportedly spent, 3) delegation of authority, 4) time wasters and 5) leadership style. The survey was pretested using $N = 12$.

The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data collected from the survey. Three types of analyses were calculated, including frequency, Pearson product-moment correlation and chi-square with cross tabulation.

In the areas of the academic library director profile and

how respondents' time was spent (Tables 1 & 2), the results of frequency analysis indicated that the population was mature both in age and experience, although almost half of them (46.5%) had been in their current position five years or less. Most of them administered staffs under 300, and only 21% of them were female. They spent a large percent of their time involved in meetings and with committees and lesser amounts of time in planning, reporting, supervising, budgeting and personnel work. Few of them spent more than three hours a week on external fund raising, but 55% of the directors spent 21 days a year or more off campus attending professional meetings or other work related events.

TABLE 1

University Library Director Profile

Size of library staff	1-150	151-300	301-450	451+
Percent:	57.9	31.4	7.5	3.1
Number of years in current position	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Percent:	46.5	25.2	15.7	22.6
Number of years as a library director				
Percent:	38	17.7	16.5	27.8
Number of years as a library administrator				
Percent:	6.3	12.6	16.4	64.8
Age	23-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Percent:	.6	22.6	47.8	28.9
Gender	MALE		FEMALE	
	78.6		21.4	

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF TIME SPENT ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Hours per week:	<u>0-3</u>	<u>4-7</u>	<u>8-11</u>	<u>12-15</u>	<u>16-19</u>	<u>20+</u>
Planning	18.2	46.1	22.1	11.7	1.3	.6
Reporting (internal & external communi- cations)	18.5	48.4	22.9	7.6	2.5	0
Supervising	56.8	30.4	10.1	1.4	.7	.7
Budgeting	44.8	43.5	9.1	2.6	0	0
Personnel work (including collective bargaining, labor relations)	42.2	38.3	14.3	3.9	1.3	0
Meetings with univer- sity administrators	49	13.9	5.1	1.9	0	0
Meetings with library administrators (e.g., assistant/associate directors, department heads)	3.9	55.5	30.3	8.4	.6	1.3
Library committees	63	30.5	3.9	2.6	0	0
University committees	67.5	27.4	3.8	.6	.6	0
External fund raising	69.1	24.2	4.7	1.3	.7	0
Number of days per year off campus for professional meet- ings or work related events	<u>0-10</u>	<u>1-20</u>	<u>21-30</u>	<u>30+</u>		
Percent	4.5	41.3	33.5	20.6		

Delegation of authority is considered an all important skill in the management of time. Information about how knowledgeable the respondents were about the delegation of authority was collected using a four-point "agree-disagree" Likert-type scale in response to a series of statements on the subject (Table 3).

Eighty-five to 90% of the academic library directors demonstrated good to excellent knowledge in this area. The two statements in which fewer of them responded appropriately for an effective delegator had to do with permitting staff to make mistakes and in doing tasks that their subordinates should be doing.

TABLE 3
DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY*

	Agree Strongly AS	Agree A	Disagree D	Disagree Strongly DS
1. I frequently allow my staff to make mistakes.	13.8	49.7	29.6	6.9
2. My staff make most of the day-to-day decisions about their work without my prior approval.	60.1	38	1.3	.6
3. I frequently do tasks that my subordinates should be doing.	1.3	29.7	43.7	25.3
4. The library does NOT function smoothly when I am absent.	.6	2.5	37.1	59.7
5. I seldom revise decisions made by my staff.	28.9	59.7	10.7	.6
6. I give my library staff considerable authority over work (e.g., personnel, finances, facilities and resources).	44	50.9	5	0
7. I frequently make decisions that are part of my subordinates' jobs.	0	9.5	55.1	35.4

TABLE 3 (CONT'D.)

	Agree Strongly AS	Agree A	Disagree D	Disagree Strongly DS
8. I delegate most library operations to my staff.	42.1	51.6	5.7	.6
9. If I were incapacitated for six months, there is someone on my staff who could readily take over my job for that period of time.	44.9	41.8	10.1	3.2
10. The department heads under my leadership do NOT delegate work well to their own subordinates.	1.3	9.2	64.7	24.8
11. My key people take the initiative for projects without waiting for me to think of them.	26.1	59.2	1.0	.6

* Percent of academic library directors responding

The library directors who answered the time management survey were asked to rank their top ten time wasters out of a list of 15. This list was then compared to responses to the same list which had been submitted to sales representatives and engineering managers in fourteen countries by Michael LeBoeuf and reported in the February 1980 issue of Business Horizons (Table 4).

TABLE 4

TOP TEN TIME WASTERS RANKED BY THREE OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

	<u>Library Manager</u>	<u>Sales Reps</u>	<u>Engineering Managers</u>
Attempting too much at once and estimating time unrealistically	1	8	---
Cluttered desk and personal disorganization	2	---	---
Confused responsibility and authority	---	---	---
Crises (personal and/or staff)	5	4	6
Drop-in visitors	6	2	9
Inability to say no	---	---	---
Inadequate, inaccurate, or delayed information	7	---	1
Indecision and procrastination	---	7	8
Ineffective delegation and involvement in routine and detail	9	---	2
Lack of objectives, priorities and deadlines	---	6	---
Lack of, or unclear, communications or instructions	4	10	5
Lack of self discipline	10	3	10
Leaving tasks unfinished	---	9	7
Meetings (scheduled and unscheduled)	3	5	4
Telephone interruptions	8	1	3

Engineering managers did not rank attempting too much among their top ten time wasters, and sales representatives placed it

near the bottom of their list. Neither sales nor engineering personnel listed a cluttered desk and personal disorganization among their top ten time wasters. There were other differences between the two management groups. For example, library managers indicated better control over the telephone than engineering managers. Library managers also perceived themselves as having fewer problems with delegation of work and having better access to information. However, there were more similarities than differences, which are born out by a low positive relationship between the two groups of managers with a correlation of .3045. On the other hand, a very low negative correlation at $-.1755$ was found between library managers and sales representatives.

Much has been written about leadership style over the years. In the beginning there was an effort to identify the traits of a leader. Later, researchers in the field of industrial psychology and management believed that leaders were either process--that is, people oriented--or they were task oriented. Today there is a trend toward team leadership which incorporates both aspects of leadership--a concern with high productivity and a concern for people. Based on the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid model, five possible leadership styles were identified depending on how respondents ranked an equal number of statements about how they dealt with conflict (Table 5). These leadership styles are based on a task-process grid that identifies the degree to which the respondent is: primarily concerned with getting the work of the organization carried out (9,1), primarily concerned with the welfare and the people in the organization (1,9), concerned with

neither task nor people (1,1), equally concerned with task and process (9,9), or at some midpoint, balancing between either task or people (5,5). A majority of the academic library directors ranked the team management conflict statement as the one that matched their most typical response. Team management integrates both task and people concerns in a leadership style that works toward developing trust and commitment in employees in an effort to foster greater productivity.

TABLE 5
LEADERSHIP STYLE

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Conflict Statement</u>
5	When conflict arises, I try to identify reasons for it and seek to resolve underlying causes. (9,9)
4	When conflict arises, I try to find a compromise that everyone will be satisfied with. (5,5)
3	When conflict arises, I try to remain neutral. (1,1)
2	I avoid causing conflict, but when it does appear, I try to smooth things over so everyone will be happy. (1,9)
1	When conflict arises, I try to cut it off or win my position. (9,1)

Correlations were run for all variables in the study. Although some writers in the field of research methodology are critical of this approach and regard it as a "fishing expedition", there are advantages in this type of a study. The results of the Pearson product-moment correlation were for the most part predictable. Correlations were found among the number of years the respondent had been in a management position,

experience as a library director, administrator, including department head or assistant/associate director and age (Table 6).

TABLE 6
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

	A	B	C	D
A. Number of years in current position		.7729	.623	.5294
B. Number of years as a library director	.7729		.5560	.4847
C. Number of years as a library administrator incl. dept. head, etc.	.4626	.5560		.4768
D. Age	.5294	.4847	.4768	

Correlations among the hours spent on meetings with university committees and the time spent in meetings with university administrators and with library committees suggested that the meeting style of university administrators may provide a role model or organizational style for the subsequent frequency of committee meetings within the library (Table 7).

TABLE 7
HOURS SPENT ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

	Hrs. Spent on Meetings with University Committees
A. Hrs. spent in meetings with university administrators	.3751
B. Hrs. spent with library committees	.4864

Correlations among the delegation statements were also predictable with those respondents who were reluctant to give staff authority over operating decisions perceiving that their library would not run smoothly when they were absent. Those library directors who did not feel that if they were incapacitated for six months, there was someone on their staffs who could take over, were more inclined to make decisions that were part of their subordinates' jobs (Table 8).

TABLE 8
DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

	A	B	C
My staff make most of the day-to-day decisions about their work without	-.3807		
I frequently do tasks that my subordinates should do.		.5013	
I seldom revise decisions made by my staff.			.3667
I give my library staff considerable authority over their work.			.3716
If I were incapacitated for six months there is someone on my staff who could take over.		-.3550	

- A: The library does NOT function smoothly when I'm gone.
B: I frequently make decisions that are part of my subordinates' jobs.
C: I delegate most operations to my staff.
-

Chi-square with cross tabulations were calculated for some of the data. In this study we were interested in the existence of significant associations among the respondent characteristics and the variables reflected by the data collected in Sections II and III of the survey instrument. These two sections dealt with how time was allocated for the various management activities and delegation. Significant associations were found among four sets of variables. The first was a very significant association at the $p = .02$ level of confidence between the number of years as a library administrator, including that of department head and assistant/associate director and the statement, "The department heads under my leadership do NOT delegate work well to their own subordinates". Those who responded in the "disagree" columns were more frequently academic library directors with fewer years of administrative experience. The appropriate response to this statement for an effective delegator was in either one of the "agree" columns.

The age of the academic library director was a significant factor in two cases. The age of the respondent was a highly significant factor in the number of days spent off campus at the $p = .0001$ level of confidence. The older the director, the more days he or she spent off campus attending professional meetings or work related professional meetings or work related events.

Age was also a factor in response to the statement, "I frequently do tasks that my subordinates should be doing". A significant association was found between the age of the academic library directors who responded in the "agree" column at the $p = .01$ level of confidence. The most frequent respondents were those who were 56 years of age or older. The appropriate response to this statement for an effective delegator is in either one of the "disagree" columns.

Gender was a factor in the number of hours spent on library committees. At the $p = .001$ level of confidence, females were found to have a highly significant association in the amount of time spent on library committee work, with women spending more hours on this activity than men.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The implications for this study are that the academic library directors who responded to this questionnaire are experienced and mature individuals who are knowledgeable about appropriate delegation skills and for the most part, team management oriented in their leadership styles. Their selection of the top three time wasters helped to focus on those areas in need of attention. The first concern is the need to examine the amount of time spent on committee work. As organizational structure continues to evolve, new ways of dealing with decision making and work flow, other than the committee, must be developed for greater productivity, without the director falling back on an outmoded authoritarian style. Second, the problem of taking on too much work at the same time should be addressed. This problem

could be a matter of more effective delegation; however, given the results of the study, it is very likely that it has more to do with identifying goals and establishing priorities. Utilizing time management techniques can also resolve the problem of the cluttered desk. Both of these latter two time wasters are probably the outgrowth of a bureaucratic organization, such as the university, where committees proliferate.

Additional research into these assumptions should be carried out, including the effects of training decision making groups in group dynamics. A replication of this study with other groups may also prove useful.

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